

Maverick Room — One Of The Best

Dine With Us



by KAYE MacPHEE and KEN QUIGLEY

This week's review found us at the Maverick Room, located in the lower level of the Beaverbrook Hotel.

As an opening note we are endeavouring to cover all types of restaurants, with a wide range of prices. The Maverick Room could not fit the average student's budget on a regular basis, however, it can serve as an excellent place to treat yourself or a friend. Their prices are higher than average, but far from exorbitant.

Formerly a tavern called The Lower Deck, the Maverick Room opened in 1973 and has a seating capacity of sixty-five.

The decor has a marine slant, blended with touches of Rockwell and Western; though the Western 'impression' may have been influenced by the music one could hear from the River Room, a club directly over the restaurant. Apparently however the problem exists only on Sunday evenings.

We arrived at about 8:00 p.m. Sunday evening and were greeted by the Assistant Manager, Greg Beers, who immediately took our coats and showed us to our table.

Once seated we were given the wine list and Ken and I were suitably impressed as each wine is easily identifiable.

The actual labels are encased in clear plastic, which is a distinct advantage for those whose memory is faulty when it comes to the specific name of a wine (like me).

The Maverick Room boasts a more than adequate salad bar;

there are approximately twenty ingredients from which to choose, as well as a good variety of salad dressings.

There is only one chef per shift and he or she cooks in full view of the patrons. The fact that only one chef works at any one time could be a possible drawback if the restaurant is full, however it caused no difficulties during our visit, as Sunday is a 'slow' night in the restaurant business. Quite frankly even if there had been a delay due to the restaurant be-

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ing busy I would not have minded, as the atmosphere is quiet and relaxing...the extra time spent would not have been unpleasant.

The Maverick Room also ensures that there is always at least one employee available who is capable of speaking both official languages; a definite plus for a restaurant housed in the same building as a hotel.

We began the meal with cheese bread which was undoubtedly the best I (Kaye) have ever eaten. It was warm, fresh, and yes, 'cheesy'. There is absolutely nothing one could say about it.

I then had their Baked French Onion Soup and I must admit, it was a bit of a disappointment as the flavour was rather mediocre. In brief, it was good but not great.

At this point I decided not to finish the soup as it is almost filling enough to be a meal, but I *did* try Ken's Caesar Salad. To put it simply, eating this salad was akin to a religious experience. If ever you want just a quick, light meal, go to the Maverick Room and partake of their Caesar Salad; you'll not regret it I can guarantee you.

We also tried one order of garlic bread and it was prepared just the way I like it - a mild taste of garlic and not too crispy. (You will note later in this review that Ken's opinion differs from mine. To Ken I say, 'everyone to their own taste', however, in this instance I am right.)

I was then treated to the Maverick Combination which consisted of barbecued spare ribs, bacon wrapped scallops served on a bed of rice, fresh mushrooms, fresh carrots, and green beans as well as a baked potato.

The spare ribs were cooked to perfection and had a subtle, sweet flavour. The rice was firm, not the least bit sticky and full-flavoured. The carrots were cooked just the way I like them, still firm and very tasty. The mushrooms were cooked whole and were exquisite; their flavour is almost indescribable! The green beans, however, were bland; almost tasteless.

The baked potato was far too moist in my opinion (and once again my view differs from Ken's). Frankly, I would have much preferred additional rice and could have done without the potato.

Prior to our visit to the Maverick Room I had not eaten scallops prepared in their fashion. They were wrapped in bacon and I felt the bacon could have been cooked a bit more, however, to be fair, perhaps if the bacon *had* been crispier it may have been difficult (if not impossible) to 'wrap' the scallops. The scallops themselves were tasty but certainly not outstanding.

To sum up, the food overall was far above average. The service was excellent; efficient and accommodating, without being patronizing. Kudos to both Tom Brooks and Greg Beers for their capable and effective management of one of the better restaurants in this city.

The Maverick Room's menu

offers a fairly wide range of food which tempted me (Ken) to order several items, worry not however; I restrained myself and ordered only the Filet Mignon with the Caesar Salad as an appetizer.

While Kaye and I were waiting for our meal to arrive, Greg brought us cheese bread as well as garlic bread. I have had both on many occasions but this cheese bread was the best I have ever eaten. An assortment of cheese flavours that burst upon the palate, making the experience almost sexual.

The garlic bread was by no means bad; it was quite tasty, but it lacked the boldness the cheese bread possessed. This quality proved to be indicative of the entire meal.

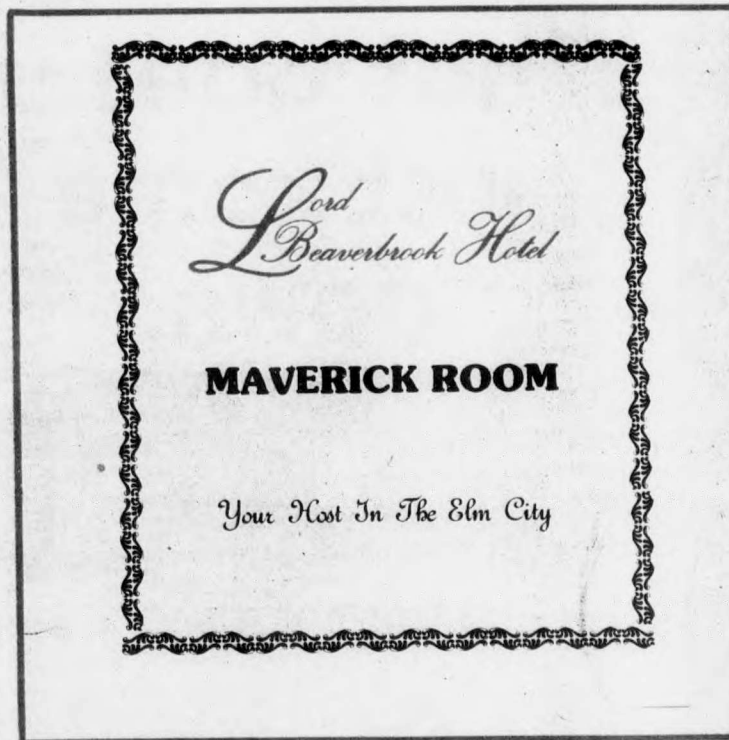
I was sitting quietly enjoying our cheese bread when I was drawn to the sound of rolling wheels. I looked up, and the manager of the restaurant, Tom Brooks, was behind a mobile salad bar. I was impressed.

This quality best describes the baked potato as well. Once again, I draw my only criticism of the meal: the chef's obvious lack of bravery. With the exception of the Caesar salad, cheese bread, and the

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mushrooms, the food was cooked so that it could not be disliked rather than loved.

One of the most exceptional aspects of the meal occurring during dessert. I selected the strawberry cheesecake. As I awaited my dessert, Greg came to our table and apologized for not having the strawberry cheesecake, whereupon he presented me with shortcake smothered in fresh blueberries



Abiding by my wishes, Tom prepared a Caesar Salad, the likes of which I have never tasted. The ingredients included capers, egg yolk, bacon bits, garlic, vegetable oil, parmesan cheese, dijon mustard, and red wine vinegar (I passed on the artichokes). I plan to return to the Maverick Room just to have a Caesar salad again.

A short time later, our main course was served. I consider myself a connoisseur of filet mignon and I must say this was not the best I've ever experienced. The bacon was not wrapped around it; rather it was beside it on the plate. I found the steak only average.

and whipped cream. I took one bite and instantly shed all memories of strawberries — and anything else for that matter. The taste of this treat defies description — there are no worthy superlatives.

My closing comments will deal with the service in the Maverick Room. I have been to some of the most expensive restaurants in Canada and nowhere have I been treated with more respect or grace. This restaurant boasts excellent service and above-average food. This reviewer extends his compliments and thanks to the management of the Maverick Room, one of the better restaurants in this city.